



**Maryland Heat Emergency Plan  
2013 Version 1.0**

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Anthony Brown  
Lt. Governor

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.  
Secretary,  
Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

Laura Herrera, M.D.  
Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services  
Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

Sherry Adams  
Director, Office of Preparedness & Response  
Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

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Sherry Adams  
Director, Office of Preparedness & Response  
Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

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## Record of Changes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Draft Number</b>
May 2011	Initial Draft	Draft 1
May 2011	Revised Draft	Draft 2
May 2011	First approved Plan	Version 1.0
July 2011	Revised Plan (Corrected minor errors)	Version 1.1
August 2011	Revised Plan Based on LHD Input and AAR	Version 1.2
May 2011	Updated draft plan with input from kick-off meeting	2012 Draft 1
May 2011	Updated draft with LHD input	2012 Draft 2
May 2012	2012 Version 1.0 Approved	2012 Version 1.0
June 2012	Revised Definitions, added recommendations	2012 Version 1.1
July 2012	Revisions throughout plan and in Complex Heat Emergency after week-long incident	2012 Version 2.0
May 2013	Minor revisions throughout plan	2013 Version 1.0

## **Summary**

### ***Purpose***

The Maryland State Heat Emergency Plan, developed by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), guides DHMH's actions during an extreme heat event, as defined below. This plan also provides guidance for Local Health Departments (LHDs) to support them as they fulfill their roles; however, it does not mandate that LHDs perform the suggested actions described.

## **Phase 1: Pre-Summer**

Pre-summer activity occurs in the spring before temperatures begin to rise. Based on temperature data collected at the Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) and ESSENCE data on Heat-related Illnesses, temperatures in Maryland can begin to spike around early May, although Extreme Heat Events don't usually begin until early June. However, it is important to begin preparing for these events early to ensure all partners are ready to activate during the first Extreme Heat Event.

### ***Triggers***

- Pre-summer activities begin in April.

### ***Surveillance***

- The National Weather Service (NWS) determines the heat impact in the forecast. The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) monitors data from the Sterling, Pittsburgh, Mt. Holly and Wakefield NWS stations.
- DHMH will conduct daily analysis of syndromic surveillance data from hospital emergency departments for indications of an increase in heat-related illness.

### ***DHMH Actions***

- DHMH will conduct an annual review of the DHMH Heat Emergency Plan and revise and update as necessary. Plan revisions may include, but not be limited to:
  - Coordinate and conduct a conference call with State Partners to review and update planning efforts.
  - Update internal and external partner points of contact.
- DHMH will provide guidance and recommend best practices to aid jurisdictions in revising local Heat Emergency Plans as requested.
- DHMH will update the DHMH website with links to LHD information.
- DHMH will distribute the revised Heat Emergency Plan and Checklists to LHDs and partners.
- MSDE, MOSH and MDoA will review and revise public education materials.

### ***Local Health Department Actions***

- LHDs will conduct an annual review of the jurisdiction's plan:
  - Revise and update local surveillance and communications plans.
    - Prepare generic press releases and local website pages.
  - Review and revise information pertaining to vulnerable populations.
  - Review and revise existing cooling center plans.
  - Review and revise available transportation programs for providing transportation assistance to cooling centers.
- LHDs will coordinate with local Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) to identify and renew expectations of local partners regarding operations activities and actions during an Extreme Heat Event.
- LHDs will identify a mechanism for cancelling large public outdoor events and coordinate with organizations that hold large outdoor events.
  - This includes drafting template public health or executive orders requiring the cancellation of such gatherings because of safety concerns.
- LHDs will engage school systems to review set guidelines for conducting and cancelling outdoor activities.
- EMAs, in coordination with LHDs, will begin actively tracking large public events that could have severe public health consequences in an extreme heat event. Key information includes, but is not limited to:
  - What the event is
  - Where it is being held
  - What triggers would result in cancellation
  - What mitigation measures are in place or planned for
  - What tools do they need to manage a potential emergency
- LHDs will ensure that heat safety warnings are included with all summer event permits.
- LHDs will update lists of local licensed health care facilities from the Office of Health Care Quality website.
- LHDs will coordinate with other local agencies (Department of Aging, Department of Social Services) to compile lists of individuals and facilities vulnerable to heat-related health issues.
  - Who are the vulnerable populations?
  - How can they be reached?

### ***Public Information***

- DHMH and LHDs will review and revise written and electronic public information materials.
- MOSH will develop public messages for outdoor workers in extreme heat and what safety precautions should be taken.
  - Modified work rest schedules, especially for those employees working in hot environments.
  - Recognition of heat-related illness.
  - Immediate interventions once a heat-related illness is recognized.
  - Preventive steps against the development of heat-related illnesses.

## **Phase 2: Pre-Event**

### ***Triggers***

- DHMH and jurisdictions should consider holding press conferences or issuing a press release on or just prior to the day of the first Extreme Heat Event, or;
- DHMH and jurisdictions should launch heat planning activities by the third week in June if no Extreme Heat Events have occurred.

### ***Surveillance***

- DHMH and LHDs will monitor weather forecasts for the possibility of predicted weather conditions consistent with extreme heat.
- DHMH will distribute weekly reports and analysis of the public health impact of heat-related illnesses. The weekly reports will be made available to the public at a predetermined time every week. These reports will include, but may not be limited to:
  - Temperature Data via the National Weather Service and MEMA.
  - Emergency Department visits for Heat-Related Illness through DHMH's syndromic surveillance system.
  - Number of heat-related deaths reported by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME).
  - Heat Advisory Reference Information.
- MEMA will monitor power outages in the state.
- MEMA will coordinate with local EMAs to monitor large public events with the potential to create a mass casualty incident.
- MIEMSS will monitor EMS systems statewide to monitor and track the number of heat-related illness emergency calls.

### ***DHMH Actions***

- DHMH will make a press announcement just prior to the day of the first Extreme Heat Event or by the third week in June if no Extreme Heat Events have occurred.
- DHMH will review and revise this plan following any Extreme Heat Events as necessary.
- DHMH will make revised public education materials available to outside organizations, the media and the general public.
- DHMH Office of Health Care Quality will contact nursing homes to promote summer preparedness, reminding them to check their generators and air conditioning systems and to report real or potential concerns and issues.
  - DHR and Aging will monitor other vulnerable care facilities in coordination with LHDs.
- DHMH will update the DHMH website with current LHD information.
- MSDE, MOSH and MDoA will make revised public education materials available to their stakeholders.

### ***Local Health Department Actions***

- LHDs will monitor the NWS for local temperature data.
- LHDs will review planning activities and maintain situational awareness.

### ***Demobilization***

- DHMH will proceed to Phase 6 of this plan in mid-September, or;
- When temperatures have cooled below 85 degrees for a period of three or more weeks.

## **Phase 3: Extreme Heat Event – Heat Advisory**

### ***Triggers***

- The NWS has issued a Heat Advisory, or;
- Temperatures meeting the criteria for a Heat Advisory are likely within the next 12 to 48 hours.

### ***Surveillance***

- DHMH will maintain situational awareness on vulnerable facilities.
- DHMH will continue to monitor syndromic surveillance systems and issue the weekly report outlined in Phase 2.
- DHMH and MEMA will monitor NWS forecasts for any indication of Extreme Heat.
- MEMA will monitor power outages.

### ***DHMH Actions***

- DHMH will notify the jurisdiction or jurisdictions expected to be impacted by the Extreme Heat Event.
  - The DHMH advisory will also be sent to other state agencies.
  - DHMH may choose to make the advisory public through release to media outlets, posting on select state agency websites and other means deemed appropriate, including social media.
- DHMH will review Extreme Heat checklists and begin taking appropriate actions.
- DHMH will coordinate with MIEMSS to issue FRED alerts when appropriate.
- DHMH and MEMA will maintain situational awareness and gauge the potential impact of the anticipated event.
- MOSH will notify employers of outdoor workers to schedule shifts to the morning and evening, avoiding peak heat hours.

### ***Local Health Department Actions***

- LHDs will report information regarding local facilities in crisis to DHMH.
- LHDs will notify local extreme heat planning partners, including DSS, Aging, EMA and DFRS.
- LHDs will activate local cooling center plans and notify DHMH with a press release or Web link to the facility locations.
  - EMAs should notify MEMA of these events.
- LHDs will activate any transportation assistance programs for vulnerable populations to be transported to cooling centers.
- LHDs will coordinate with EMAs for recommending heightening mitigation protections for or discouraging outdoor public events.



- LHDs will review plans for extra staffing and emergency support services and stage potential resources.
- LHDs will coordinate with relevant organizations to provide outreach to vulnerable populations.
  - Coordinate with existing volunteers and partners for responding to extreme heat.
- LHDs will coordinate public messaging with public access numbers such as nonemergency dispatch, 211, 311 or using reverse 911 systems.

### ***Public Information***

- DHMH will coordinate with each jurisdiction on Extreme Heat Event communications.
- LHDs should provide all locally used call centers (911, 211, hospital and private ‘Ask a Nurse’ lines) information on cooling centers and transportation options.
- DHMH and LHDs will employ consistent messaging that urges individuals to check on elderly neighbors and family members.
- DHMH and LHDs will include Pet Emergency Preparedness for heat-related illness prevention in messaging. Resources can be found at Ready.gov<sup>1</sup> or other pet preparedness websites.
- Local Jurisdictions, MTA and SHA utilize existing digital signage (such as outside firehouses, other public buildings or on public buses) to display concise heat safety tips.
- MOSH will issue heat safety tips for outdoor workers.

### ***Demobilization***

- DHMH will revert to Phase 2 when temperatures drop back below 100 degrees.

## **Phase 4: Extreme Heat Event – Excessive Heat Warning**

### ***Triggers***

- The NWS has issued an Excessive Heat Warning, or;
- Temperatures meeting the criteria for an Excessive Heat Warning are likely within the next 12 to 48 hours, or;
- Temperatures meeting the criteria for a Heat Advisory are expected to continue for three or more days.

### ***DHMH Actions***

DHMH will take all the actions outlined in Phase 3: Extreme Heat Event – Heat Advisory and:

- DHMH will engage 211 as a public access number for heat-related questions; provide 211 with up-to-date public messaging materials.
- DHMH will conduct conference calls to discuss potential impact of event with stakeholders. The calls may include, but are not limited to:
  - Internal DHMH Staff
  - Local Health Department Staff
  - Other State Agencies

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/pets.html>

- DHMH will gather information on designated cooling centers to report to MEMA.
- DHMH and MEMA will operate on an Enhanced Readiness level in preparation for a Complex Heat Emergency.
- DHMH will supply local health departments with updated lists of licensed facilities for tracking.
- DHR and MDoA will maintain a list of vulnerable nonmedical facilities, such as assisted living facilities.

#### ***Local Actions***

- LHDs will provide DHMH with updated information on local cooling centers.

#### ***Demobilization***

- DHMH will revert to Phase 2 when temperatures drop back below 100 degrees.

## **Phase 5: Complex Heat Emergency**

#### ***Triggers***

- DHMH and MEMA will use discretion in deciding what conditions constitute a complex heat emergency, which may include, but are not limited to:
  - Significant power or water outages, or;
  - Extended Heat Waves lasting more than three days;
  - Any other factors that would exacerbate a Heat Emergency.

#### ***Surveillance***

- DHMH will begin issuing the Daily Heat-Related Illness Surveillance Report through the duration of the emergency.
  - The final Daily Report will be issued the day following the final Heat Advisory day, with surveillance data from the final Extreme Heat day.
  - The disbursement of death data will follow a prescribed flow of information due to the overwhelming number of requests for information during these events. Considerations in the process include, but are not limited to:
    - OCME Death Data will be routed internally to the Office of Preparedness & Response.
    - Local Health Officers or their designee will be notified of the details of deaths in their jurisdiction by DHMH.
    - The daily report is sent to planning partners and posted to the DHMH website.
- MEMA will map heat deaths and 911 calls reported by MIEMSS with heat-related illness as a chief complaint for use in targeting vulnerable population outreach.
  - MEMA will also monitor power outages, social media, special events and weather.

#### ***DHMH Actions***

- DHMH will conduct regular conference calls to discuss potential impact of event with stakeholders. The calls may include, but are not limited to:

- Internal DHMH Staff
  - Local Health Department Staff
  - Other State Agencies
- DHMH will coordinate with MEMA, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), the Department on Aging (MDoA), the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Mental Health Administration (MHA), LHDs and other organizations as necessary to determine if facilities with vulnerable populations need additional assistance.
  - Facilities include, but are not limited to:
    - Dialysis Centers
    - Nursing Homes
    - Senior Assisted Living Facilities
- DHMH will coordinate with MEMA, DHR, MDoA and LHDs to monitor, track and post the locations of cooling centers and shelters statewide.
- MEMA will request information from local EMAs on events that may be affected by the complex heat emergency.
- DHMH and MEMA will activate widespread power outage plans as necessary.
- MEMA will assume incident command for the Heat Incident and begin coordinating Emergency Support Functions in support of response.
- MEMA and Local Emergency Management will coordinate with local emergency services to report any facilities encountered with excessively hot interiors that may pose a danger to residents.
- PSC will suspend water and power utility shut-off for occupied buildings during the event.
- VOAD will coordinate with volunteer organizations to gather teams to supplement outreach efforts and/or pass out supplies.
- DHR will open a temporary emergency center for areas that may be without water or power for an extended period of time as necessary.
- MTA will modify public transportation to be utilized as a cooling method for vulnerable groups or to transport them to a cooling center.

#### ***Local Health Department Actions***

- LHDs will notify their EMAs of large-scale public events in the local jurisdiction that have the potential to result in a mass casualty incident.
  - Refer to list maintained from Phase 2.
  - Proposition local assets with the authority to cancel the event should the triggers be reached.
- Local EMAs will notify MEMA, DHMH and MIEMSS of the above events.
- LHDs will cancel or ensure greater mitigation measures for outdoor public events.
- LHDs will expand cooling center capacity as necessary and notify state officials.
- Local EMAs will provide ice and/or dry ice to areas without power for cooling purposes.
- Local DSS will open shelters as needed.
- Local EMAs will mobilize community leaders to check on and assist vulnerable individuals in targeted locations.
- Local EMAs will utilize Emergency Services for welfare checks on identified vulnerable populations.

### ***Water Shortages***

- In the event of a widespread and/or prolonged water shortage, the Jurisdiction's Health Department and the Department of Public Works should consider providing alternative potable water to affected residents. Resources can also be requested through local EMA.
- Consider requesting assistance from the private sector in providing and distributing free water.

### ***Power Outages***

- In the event of a widespread and/or prolonged power outage, DHMH will coordinate with MEMA, the Public Service Commission and Power Companies to ensure that facilities with vulnerable populations outlined above receive priority in restoration due to the life-threatening nature of extreme heat in a powerless facility.
- Pharmacy restrictions on the ability to renew prescriptions will be lifted.

### ***Public Information***

- MEMA will activate a Joint Information Center to address public messaging.
- MEMA and DHMH, through the JIC, will use 211 or public access numbers to distribute heat emergency information.
- Heat Prevention Messages include, but are not limited to:
  - Stay in a cool place.
  - If you do not have air conditioning:
    - Visit cooling centers in your area.
    - Go to the mall, a movie theater, or the home of friend with air conditioning.
  - Check on your neighbors, friends and family frequently, several times a day if possible. The socially isolated and elderly are most at risk during the heat.
  - Drink plenty of fluids like water, but avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages.
  - If you or someone you know is experiencing headaches, confusion, dizziness, nausea or a rapid heartbeat, get immediate medical attention.
  - Never leave children or pets alone in a car.
  - Call 211, 311 or another public access number to report nonmedical emergencies or to request a ride to a cooling center.

### ***Demobilization***

- DHMH will revert to a previous phase once the complicating factors have been resolved, or;
- MEMA stands down the SEOC, or;
- DHMH will revert to Phase 5 if an Excessive Heat Warning is in effect, or;
- DHMH will revert to Phase 4 if a Heat Advisory is in effect, or;
- DHMH will revert to Phase 2 if temperatures have dropped back below 100 degrees.

## **Phase 6: Post-Summer**

The post-summer activities typically begin in mid-September and include After Action Reporting and planning for the next operational period.

### ***Triggers***

- Post-summer activities begin in September.

### ***DHMH Actions***

- DHMH ceases circulating weekly heat reports in September.
- Where applicable, collect After Action Reports from the jurisdictions and determine best practices to be included in the following year's planning efforts.
- Collect, analyze and release statewide surveillance data from the summer for use in future heat planning.
- Review and update State Heat Plan, including a comprehensive review of local plans and resources, to be completed and posted by May 1.

### ***Local Health Department Actions***

- Cease heat-event monitoring and return cooling centers to normal hours if applicable.
- Coordinate with DHMH on an annual heat plan review.
- Identify organizations serving high-risk populations that can be utilized in the following season.
- Develop or revise information on high-risk individuals.
- Coordinate with local partners to identify lists of individuals and facilities that would be vulnerable during a heat emergency.
- Develop or revise an accessible record on facilities and locations from OHCQ.
- Conduct an evaluation of interventions:
  - Review evaluation tools to monitor effectiveness
    - Cooling center usage
    - Transportation program usage, if available

## **Definitions**

*Complex Heat Emergency* – A Complex Heat Emergency is a condition of an Extreme Heat Event with complications requiring additional response. Examples of such complications are water or power shortages or an extended heat wave.

*Cooling Centers* – The actual definition of a ‘cooling center’ may vary from county to county. For the purposes of this plan, a cooling center refers to a building identified by local authorities with air conditioning and water. A cooling center does not necessarily provide medical services. Cooling center plans may identify general locations such as public libraries or malls where the LHD recommends going to escape the heat, or designating locations such as community centers with extended hours and bottled water.

*Excessive Heat Warning* – The National Weather Service issues an Excessive Heat Warning when the heat index is expected to exceed 110 degrees or conditions are such to pose a risk to life and property.

*Excessive Heat Watch* – These are issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 12 to 48 hours. A Watch is used when the risk of a heat wave has increased, but its occurrence and timing are still uncertain. A Watch provides enough lead time so those who need to prepare can do so, such as cities that have excessive heat event mitigation plans.

*Extreme Heat Event* – An Extreme Heat Event is a weather condition with excessive heat and/or humidity that has the potential to cause heat-related illnesses. An Extreme Heat Event is defined as a day or series of days when:

- The National Weather Service has issued a Heat Advisory or Extreme Heat Warning, or;
- Weather or environmental conditions are such that a high incidence of heat-related illnesses can reasonably be expected.

*Heat Advisory* – The National Weather Service issues a Heat Advisory when the ambient temperature is expected to rise about 100 degrees Fahrenheit or the Heat Index is expected to reach 105 to 110 degrees. When determining the first Heat Advisory for the summer these thresholds are lower.

*Heat Index* – The Heat Index is a measure of what the temperature actually feels like. The heat index is a combination of both the actual temperature and humidity, and is the best indicator for a pending Extreme Heat Event. The Heat Index is the key indicator of an Extreme Heat Event by the National Weather Service.<sup>2</sup>

*Heat-related Death*- A death is determined to be heat related when *the investigation indicates that person was exposed to excess heat* and any or some of the following scenarios occur:

- 1) The person exhibited signs or symptoms of heat related illness prior to collapse
- 2) The person was participating in an activity that caused exertion

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.weather.gov/om/heat/index.shtml>

- 3) The person had underlying medical conditions which may have been exasperated by the heat
- 4) An autopsy was conducted in which there was no apparent acute anatomic cause of death

*Heat-related Illness* – A Heat-related Illness is a condition caused by extreme heat, usually dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke or a medical condition exacerbated by heat events.

*Heat Cramps* – Painful muscle spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs following strenuous activity. The skin is usually moist and cool, and the pulse is normal or slightly raised. Body temperature is mostly normal. Heat cramps often are caused by a lack of salt in the body.

*Heat Exhaustion* – A condition characterized by faintness, rapid pulse, nausea, profuse sweating, cool skin and collapse, caused by prolonged exposure to heat accompanied by loss of adequate fluid and salt from the body.

*Heat Stroke* – A severe condition caused by impairment of the body's temperature-regulating abilities, resulting from prolonged exposure to excessive heat and characterized by cessation of sweating, severe headache, high fever, hot dry skin, and, in serious cases, collapse and coma.

*High-Risk Groups* – High-Risk Groups are populations that are disproportionately affected by Extreme Heat Events. These groups include children and youth athletes, individuals who may be socially isolated (such as the elderly or those with psychiatric illness) and individuals with medical risk factors, such as alcoholism, cardiovascular or pulmonary disease, hypertension, diabetes or tobacco use.

### **List of Terms**

National Weather Service

Local Health Department

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Maryland Emergency Management Agency